

Volunteer Briefing: Succession planning for Local Networks: Best practice

Summary

Finding new volunteers to help with the running of your committee is an area that many Local and Technical Networks can struggle with. The run up to a new session is always a good time to focus on succession planning.

The IET Communities Team have put together this briefing to help you in the process of succession planning and signpost you to related resources.

Have a plan!

A good succession plan is essential for any committee. Allowing a gradual turnover and refreshing the roles & responsibilities of members ensures a healthy balance between new ideas and experience. It also provides a clear progression route to motivate volunteers, and removes the risk associated with all the knowledge and responsibility sitting with just one or two individuals.

Guidance on good succession planning

Please note that the following are not mandatory. Every Local Network has to work within the resources they have, but if adhered to these points can help:

- Individuals in key leadership roles (Chair/Secretary/Treasurer) should serve for a period considered appropriate by the team, but not exceeding three years.
- Once a volunteer has served their term in a key role they should only serve in another key role on the same leadership team after a period of 1 year.
- It is important that the Chair retains the confidence of the leadership team as a whole.
- The Chair should facilitate the recruitment and retirement of team members to ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained. Teams should ideally seek a balance of skills, experience and age range in members.
- Each team should have a Vice-Chair to provide support to the Chair and deputise as necessary.

Note – for continuity, it may make sense for the Vice-Chair to become the Chair (Elect) when the existing Chair steps down.

- The Chair and Vice-Chair can be selected in any way that the team considers to be appropriate.
- Ideally, at least two members of the committee should be aged below 30. Where appropriate these persons may be agreed representatives of an associated Young Professional (YP) section.
- Terms of office should commence on 1 October every year to correspond with the start of the IET community session.

- In order to ensure continuity, terms of office should be staggered.
- The main leadership team should typically consist of no more than 10-15 people. However, there can be many more volunteers involved in planning and delivering activities who are monitored by the main committee, but who do not attend formal meetings. For example: members of subsections or technical advisory panels.
- Members of a leadership team who are unable to contribute should be asked kindly by the Chair, with the agreement of the rest of the committee, to step down in order to make way for others.

Note – this would be after a discussion between the Chair and the member to determine whether or not they are inactive because they don't have the time, or because they haven't been given opportunities to get involved.

- Invite the Chair of your On Campus Group to join your committee.

Recruiting volunteers

Seeking new recruits is one of the most significant ways that communities can encourage member engagement and contribute to member retention across the IET.

There is no formal election process for community leadership teams and it is not a legal requirement for communities in the UK to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM). If more than one person is interested in a leadership position that has become vacant, or more than one person is nominated, then the existing management team should discuss the candidates and vote to decide if necessary.

The Communities staff team can help community leadership teams to instigate recruitment campaigns to encourage members to become volunteers. Individual members are also encouraged to offer their services and get involved at any time.

For TPNs we have a [TPN recruitment webpage](#) which lists the networks that are currently recruiting. This is listed on the [Volunteer Opportunities webpage](#), which is where recruitment campaigns can be advertised.

LN's can send any requests for promoting vacancies to your Community Manager or Community Event Producer. Recruitment notices will then be added to your regular emails.

Alternatively, if you have access to Adestra (our HTML emailing system) you can use this to communicate any volunteering opportunities to members in your local area. You can also use the 'Highlights' section in your online community.

Tell us your experiences

We want to hear about the ways you have recruited new members into your committee and ensured there is a regular flow of talent. Email us at communities@theiet.org with your ideas.

Briefing last updated	July 2017
Briefing next review	July 2018